

FIRST AID FOR DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Some dental problems are fairly common in school children. Listed below are first-aid steps that may be taken when a dental emergency at school occurs. These measures are only to provide temporary relief. When a dental emergency occurs, the parents should be notified so that follow-up with the child's dentist can be arranged as soon as possible.

Suggestions for first aid supplies for dental emergencies include: sterile gauze, cotton rolls, dental floss, wax and ice packs.

PROBLEM	ACTION NEEDED
Toothache	Rinse mouth with warm water to clean out any food or Use dental floss to remove food caught between teeth. If area is swollen, place cold compress on outside of cheek. Do not use hot compress or place an aspirin next to the aching tooth. Contact child's parent and recommend they contact their dentist.
Bitten Tongue or Lip	Apply pressure to the bleeding area, using a sterile gauze square or clean cloth. If area is swollen, apply cold compress. If bleeding continues after 15 to 30 minutes, contact the parent to call their dentist or transport to the emergency room.
Broken Tooth	Gently clean area with gauze and warm water to remove blood, dirt and debris. Apply cold compress on face next to tooth to minimize swelling. Rinse tooth gently and place in a cup of milk or cool water. Contact parent to arrange follow-up with dentist immediately.
Knocked-out Tooth	Rinse tooth gently, but do not wipe or scrub it. Place it in a cup of milk or cool water. Contact parent to take child to their dentist immediately.
Prolonged Bleeding	Have child bite on sterile gauze or cotton roll at extraction site, replacing gauze when it becomes soaked. If bleeding has not slowed or stopped within two hours, contact parents to follow-up with dentist.
Orthodontic Problems	Cover any wire causing an irritation with wax or gauze until dentist can repair it. If wire is imbedded in mouth tissue, do not attempt to remove it; let the child's orthodontist do so. If appliance breaks or becomes loose, notify parents to contact orthodontist.
Objects Between Teeth	Try to remove the object with dental floss, being careful not to cut gum tissue. Do not use sharp or pointed instruments to remove object.
Possible Broken Jaw	Try to immobilize jaw by placing a scarf, handkerchief, towel, or necktie under the chin and tying the ends on top of the head. Apply cold compresses for swelling Call parents to contact the child's dentist or to take to an emergency room for care.